

SECRET

TCS-3646-58

Series A

Copy 14 of 22

12 September 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: Admiral Arleigh Burke  
Chief of Naval Operations

SUBJECT : Sanitization of TALENT Photography

REFERENCE : Ser NT-00187, 12 June 1958 (TCS-3367-58)

1. On 12 June 1958 you wrote to the Director of Central Intelligence requesting permission for the sanitization of TALENT photography collected over the European Satellites, the Leningrad and Kola Peninsula areas and the Soviet Far East Maritime Provinces, and its removal from the TALENT security system in order to meet Navy needs arising from its responsibility to prepare pilots to deliver weapons against assigned targets in the event of war. This problem has been examined at length by the Ad Hoc Requirements Committee (ARC) and the Utilization Advisory Board (UAB).

2. The sensitive character of the operations whereby TALENT photography has been collected is, as you are well aware, extraordinary. The need for the information thus collected, in order for intelligence properly to support national security, is also extraordinary. Over the last two and a half years as these materials have become available, the agencies in the Intelligence Advisory Committee (IAC) having a principal interest have collaborated closely in order to ensure maximum exploitation and use of these materials consistent with security. Considerable progress has been made in devising ways and means of using the information safely outside of the security control system and under normal security handling. I strongly support these efforts and have urged continued imaginative efforts to find new ways to obtain the greatest possible use of the information. Ways have been found to sanitize photography in order to prevent exposure of data bearing upon altitude, scale, camera configuration characteristics, and track to officials outside the TALENT system. However, we thus far have been able to find no effective means of sanitizing photographs to prevent non-TALENT-cleared personnel from deducing that the picture must have been taken as a result of penetration of the Soviet air space by some means.

NAVY HAS NO OBJECTION TO DECLASSIFICATION  
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3. A plausible attribution of sanitized TALENT photography might be from generally known previous photographic collections over the USSR, such as balloon photography. However, there are technical reasons why conformance of TALENT to such photography is infeasible. In the case of photography taken over the European Satellites where it is understood that the Navy has been assigned a number of special weapons strike targets, it may be that plausible attribution could be made to overflight by the Navy or the Air Force in recent years. Whereas one might make a distinction between the European Satellites and the USSR in terms of sensitivity of the fact of overflight, at the moment it appears that there really is no such distinction since permission from higher authority for overflight in the European Satellite areas would have to be secured.

4. The most effective use of TALENT photography in the preparation of target materials for pilot briefing so far is the target folder program undertaken jointly by the Air Force and the Navy. In essence, this is a reissuance of World War II photography annotated or adjusted by overlays to reflect new intelligence without reference to source and displayed in such fashion as to prevent comparison and, therefore, attribution to a TALENT photograph if indeed the two materials were laid side-by-side. Sealed packages with TALENT photographs are under existing procedure already being made available for an instant's use in an emergency for pilot briefing. I would hope the use of annotated overlays mentioned above would provide reasonably adequate study materials for the pilots while at the same time would protect the security of the fact of overflight prior to an emergency.

5. In the event that, after careful consideration of the national security risks as well as needs for release of sanitized TALENT materials solely on a TOP SECRET basis and outside of the TALENT Control System, it is your conviction that nothing less than TALENT material itself in sanitized form (which would expose the fact of overflight) will enable you to carry out your responsibility adequately, please so inform me. I believe that under present circumstances the fact of an overflight (with implied authority) is essentially higher authority's information, hence I would be compelled to seek guidance in this matter from that higher authority.

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/s/ C. P. Cabell  
C. P. CABELL  
General, USAF  
Acting Director

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